



**I'm no Nazi, and this is no swastika: Eugene Terre Blanche of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement has vowed to disrupt Mandela's democracy, using "any means necessary."**

# Into the Heart of Whiteness

**I**T'S THE OLDEST RULE of hunting—if you wait at his watering hole, the lion will come to you. The rumor is that Eugene Terre Blanche, leader of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement, the largest white militant organization in South Africa, is on the run. At dawn, a police antiterrorist unit arrested thirty-two of his right-wing soldiers, charging them with 21 counts of murder and 139 counts of attempted murder, along with possession of explosives and illegal weapons. It is Wednesday of election week in South Africa, and a miracle seems to be happening. Factions that had promised bloody war here, even Chief Buthelezi and his Zulu warlords, have

called a truce—at least temporarily—to elect a black president. All except white diehards like Terre Blanche, who is boycotting the elections and promising to disrupt the new democracy, using “any means necessary.”

Not so long after the sun sets, Terre Blanche walks into the pub at the Ventersdorp Hotel, a beer-drenched lair of brownshirts and armed right-wing misfits in South Africa's rural platteland, about one hundred miles outside Johannesburg. Frans, the bartender, and the regulars stop playing darts and greet the Leader, hands clasping forearms, as is the custom in these parts. A burly *oke* in his fifties, white beard neatly trimmed, camouflage cap pulled low, Terre Blanche does not look like the most dangerous man in South Africa. No gun visible, just a screwdriver sticking out a side pocket of his work pants. He ducks into the gents, returns, spots me before he sits at the bar.

“Hello, cowboy,” he says, ordering a whiskey for us both.

His blue, usually ardent eyes (“They burn with a pure flame of my people's desire for a white homeland”) are now bloodshot; and his voice, a rumbling, gravel-pit-deep baritone, has quieted to a whisper. We talk about the raids on his organization, which, in his native Afrikaans, is called the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, or AWB. He says among the

**Democracy has come to South Africa with a bang, not a whimper. A month on the run with the mad bombers of the ultra-right-wing Afrikaner resistance.**

**BY DANIEL VOLL**

arrested are Nico Prinsloo, his right-hand man and secretary general, and the leader of the Iron Guards, his elite paramilitary unit. His fist slams the bar. “The bastards!”

Yes, he expects to be arrested, but no use running. “I’ve just come from my farm, where I told my black workers that I may be gone for a long time. I told them to feed the sheep and the cattle.”

“And your horses?” (Terre Blanche—French for White Earth—was once a playwright, and I know my part in this drama: I am the writer who seeks his confession, and like him, I will play my part shamelessly.)

“Ja, I said goodbye to my horses.” He downs his drink, buries his face in his huge hands. (“He’s got such *fokken* big hands,” one of his enemies marveled. “I mean, you should see those hands. Big as *fokken* lavatory seats.”) His fingernails are caked with dirt. “I am a lonely man,” he says, “a simple man, a Boer farmer.”

Four major bombs have gone off in the days before the elections, including a car bomb in downtown Johannesburg, which killed nine; another at a taxi rank, killing eleven; and a blast at Jan Smuts airport, which caused ten million dollars in damage. Now that his men have been arrested, will his organization, which claims to be the IRA of South Africa, take responsibility for the bombs? There have been deaths, I say,



and people want to know if you were part of those deaths. "No," he growls, shaking his huge, bearded head. "I won't take credit for those bombings." He hunches deeper into the bar. "Our men have never killed anybody, except a few blacks."

"Then who planted the bombs?"

"You tell me," he bellows, clearly exasperated. "Who is Father Christmas?" He orders cigarettes from the bartender, settling for Chesterfields. A second whiskey is ordered.

Frans's young daughter runs across the bar, wanting to be kissed by the Leader. For a beguiling moment, Terre Blanche is indeed Santa Claus, lifting her high into the air, and then she is gone, scampering across the room. He turns to me, his voice somber. "What will her future be like under a black government? We taught them what was gold, we taught them what was diamonds, we taught them what was trains—and now they will kick us in the face. They will burn our flag and throw our books into the streets."

I tell him he looks tired.

"I hardly sleep at night," he says, lighting another cigarette. "When I close my eyes, I dream of betrayals."

For Terre Blanche, who has cast himself as military savior of Afrikaner nationalism, these are indeed trying times. I understand the desire for a few stiff drinks. Not only were his top generals locked up—perhaps for life—but, even worse, today the enemy breached Ventersdorp, his hometown. Right around the corner from his bunkered headquarters, where he's spent the last years declaring that a black government will never rule his people, local black voters—protected by the army and the police—cast their votes in South Africa's first democratic elections.

Most of South Africa's 5 million whites, including the vast majority of the 2.7 million law-abiding Afrikaners, believed former president P. W. Botha when he said that they must "adapt or die." In a whites-only referendum two years ago, more than 65 percent voted for a measure that started the country toward this week's all-race elections. And now, the AWB, which claims sixty thousand dues-paying members—with a hard core of armed, racist soldiers—finds itself on the other end of the gun and the legal system.

Clearly, the apartheid system, designed to remove South Africa's thirty million blacks to bleak tribal "homelands," had not worked. Millions of blacks, flouting apartheid's pass laws, had poured into the sprawling megatownship of Soweto, outside Johannesburg, and into squatter camps around Cape Town rather than live in the homelands. And the South African economy desperately needed the workers. When Botha's successor, F. W. de Klerk, also an Afrikaner, brought African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela out of prison in 1990 and began negotiations for a democratic election, he irrevocably split the Afrikaner tribe.

Right-wing ideologues like Terre Blanche, unwilling to give up apartheid's central belief in separateness, hit upon the idea of a *volkstaat*, a separate Afrikaner homeland within South Africa. The *volkstaat*, in Terre Blanche's fondest hopes, would include roughly the territories of the old Boer repub-

lic—parts of Orange Free State, the Western Transvaal, and northern Natal, with Richard's Bay as its port. It is the land of their forefathers, the white tribe of Africa, who arrived from Germany, France, and Holland in the 1600s. Land they fought and died for in battles against the Zulu and Xhosa tribes, and finally the British. This is a sizable chunk of South Africa, roughly 20 percent of the country. "Our own little Israel," championed former defense minister General Constand Viljoen: He had a military plan for how the *volkstaat* could be accomplished. It was a boon for Terre Blanche, a former policeman who wanted the world finally to see that he was no neo-Nazi, but a patriot, one of those Afrikaners who wasn't so citified that he'd lost his roots.

And at root, Terre Blanche reckons, the true Afrikaner is a Boer, a man of the earth, a farmer; the rest, such as de Klerk, are traitors who betrayed the *volk* to the CIA, the Jews, and Jane Fonda. Others might choose the ballot to decide their fate in a country where blacks outnumber whites six to

one, but Terre Blanche didn't like those odds. He roared that the election would never take place. The borders of his people's *volkstaat* would be drawn in blood.

But here he sits on a barstool, impotent king of his own right-wing castle, without even the dignity of arrest or martyrdom. A month ago, in less desperate times, the Leader was the cause célèbre of the international right-wing set. One day, he answered the phone in his office, spoke for a minute in Afrikaans, then, cupping his hand over the receiver, asked me, "Who's David Duke? Is he a right-winger?" While Duke,

the American white supremacist, sought an audience with Terre Blanche, out of the fax machine spun an invitation from Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky: Come, establish your new white homeland in Russia!

But tonight, when the police commissioner—currently dodging investigations of his own complicity in anti-ANC hit squads—appears on the television screen to announce, "We've arrested the brains behind the bombings," the insult is not lost on old Terre Blanche. He bellows back, "The bombings will continue! The Boer will fight! We are heading toward revolution, not toward peace and prosperity."

ONCE THE CORTEX FUSE IS LIT, you have about thirty seconds before the car bomb explodes. And if you've packed the trunk of the stolen Audi with two hundred pounds of explosives (stolen from the gold mines, where you've learned your lethal trade) all tamped into short lead pipes, you'd better run like hell. That's enough explosives to level a few square blocks of downtown Johannesburg. As you run, you pass two white policemen, just a blur. You jump into a getaway car around the corner and are three blocks away when you first hear the blast. You did not expect the sound to be so beautiful, to echo around you in the Sunday-morning air.

You listen to the radio for news of soft targets—humans. The two cops are okay, just injured, but a white woman is dead, which snags in your gut until you hear that she was ANC. You are at war, and, well, war is politics; didn't even the white traitor President de Klerk, who handed over the country to the black communists without firing

**Terre Blanche had become the cause célèbre of the international right-wing set. Vladimir Zhirinovsky even sent an invitation: Come, establish your new white homeland in Russia!**



**Old Boers:** Three generations of armed farmers from Africa's white tribe. Anglo-Boer War, 1900.

a single shot—wasn't he the one who said politics isn't for sissies? Drive slow, but not too slow, ambulances and cops still flying in the other direction. It won't matter if they catch you: Didn't Barend Strydom, a true right-wing patriot, kill eleven kaffirs, and they gave him amnesty—and before he killed them, didn't Barend go up to the Voortrekker Monument, that testament to Afrikaner survival, and pray, "Dear Lord, if you don't want me to do this, please give me a sign"? And then Barend made his vow to God, just as you did this morning, in the name of the volkstaat, the white state, that this day might be an anniversary.

**T**HAT SUNDAY MORNING, three days before the elections, just after dawn, I am standing on a balcony in Johannesburg with three press photographers. They are debating whether to wear bulletproof vests. Even the Zulus have quit threatening civil war and climbed aboard the election train, and the quiet is making us nervous. Last week in Tokoza, a black township outside Johannesburg, the bang-bang had been intense. Photographer Ken Oosterbroek wasn't wearing a vest, and now he is dead. Kevin Carter, who'd just won a Pulitzer, as if that matters now, says a vest wouldn't have helped—the bullet entered under Ken's arm, pierced his heart. Ken had been his best friend. A war zone last week, kids with silver AK-47's on both sides. Another photographer, Greg Marinovich, took a round to the chest; if he'd been wearing a vest, the bullets would have dinged off the ceramic plate, and he wouldn't be in the hospital now. Kevin models a dark-blue vest—very slick, very security police, we fear. Still, we all put them on and head out.

Into the black townships on the East Rand, just outside Johannesburg, where whitey comes in at his own risk, we search for dead bodies in the golden light of morning, the

best light for photographers. Charred barricades, streets still smoldering. Neighborhoods of burned-out houses. In the past year, hundreds have been shot, hacked, burned, and necklaced to death on these streets in tribal and political fighting—mostly between local ANC comrades and Zulus loyal to Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party. Last week, twenty-seven were killed in one day: proof, right-winger's carp, that black South Africans don't want peace.

Hey, Com.

Hey, cameraman, the kid says, waving us past.

Today, whitey with a camera is okay. Today, whitey with a camera is cool. We drive on through a scorched no-go zone of charred structures that separates the ANC residents' homes and the barracklike Zulu hostels, some of which hold several thousand men—an area known as Beirut. Kevin Carter rides shotgun, an illegal police scanner pressed to his ear, listening to the cops talk in Afrikaans. We watch rooftops for snipers at their usual posts. But all is quiet this morning. Army troops in casspirs—armored vehicles designed to withstand land mines—rumble past cows eating garbage alongside the dirt roads.

Instead of the familiar *tat-tat-tat* of AK-47's, we hear bugle calls and see ranks of Zulus, shields and traditional weapons held aloft, *toi-toiing* up the hill from the hostels, toward us, a high warbling in the air. We drop to our knees, shooting pictures. Spearpoints touch our chests as the Zulu *impi* claims the ground, moving forward, warlike but jubilant. They are off to an election rally, escorted by the army casspirs. All hail Chief Minister Gatsha Buthelezi's call! Finally, in the eleventh hour, he has asked all Zulus to put aside their guns—at least for now—and vote Inkatha! In the front ranks, a male Zulu warrior wears a tattered black bra. We laugh for the first time in days.



Kevin picks up a report on the scanner. A bomb in downtown Johannesburg, a block from ANC headquarters, a hundred yards from my hotel. Welcome to the new South Africa. We've all seen bombs—110 have gone off in the past month—but nothing has prepared us for this.

Two hundred pounds of explosives packed into a cream-colored Audi. Nine killed, ninety wounded. Flying shrapnel, severed limbs, a blinded child. The wounded carted into ambulances as we arrive. The Audi still on fire, upside down. Glass everywhere, rusty water pouring through the streets, reddened with blood. Twisted steel, shattered windows, raging fire. Two prostitutes in terry-cloth robes, dumb with shock, stand in front of a corner massage parlor. I walk on, as if I know where I am going. Bomb-sniffing dogs strain at leashes. A woman crumbles in a corner. An angry black crowd pushes at the police barricades.

**M**ANNIE MARITZ, legendary Afrikaner nationalist and former junior heavyweight wrestling champion of the empire, has for this week converted his farm, an hour east of Pretoria, into a right-wing refugee salon, a rest stop for Afrikaner Resistance Movement members on the run.

It might be dangerous to show up unannounced at the Maritz farm on this election eve, two days after the Johannesburg bombing, so I call. If there's one thing an Afrikaner respects, it's a chap with a sense of politeness. Maritz, who once defeated an American who was 102 pounds heavier and a foot taller, invites me over for "soup with the blokes."

Among the blokes is Terre Blanche's secretary general, Nico Prinsloo. Within hours, he will be arrested for allegedly masterminding this bombing campaign. But for now, he offers me a cigarette while a commando of thirty AWB soldiers lounge nearby in khaki uniforms with pistols stuck into their belts. Prinsloo, thirty-two, wears blue jeans and a dress shirt; his eyes are calm today, focused. He is soft-spoken, married, and is himself a farmer. Like most white males of his generation, he spent mandatory army service in the South African Defense Force on the northern border during the heyday of an official government paranoia called Total Onslaught, which blamed all unrest in South Africa on communists stealing across the border.

A pack of barnyard dogs are sniffing and rolling underfoot; Malay gamecocks strut the lawn. Before we serve ourselves from giant kettles of soup and platters of white bread, the sixty-nine-year-old Maritz—whose father was a general in the Anglo-Boer War and whose great-great-grandfather was one of the original trekkers who led his white tribe into the African interior—asks us to bow our heads in prayer. Invoking the Vow of Blood River, which "protected our forefathers" in their epic stand against the Zulus more than a century ago, Maritz asks God's protection in the days of unknowing ahead. The vow ends: "Deliver our enemies unto us."

We take our bowls to the edge of the lawn, and in the company of bantam chickens, swans, several peacocks, and a pair of ostriches, all penned nearby, Prinsloo asks me about the size of the first bomb.

I say two hundred pounds, and Prinsloo shakes his head as if surprised. "Jissis, dis 'n fokken groot bom."

But there isn't a look of satisfaction in his eyes when I tell him about the blasts, which killed mostly blacks; instead, he seems a little squeamish when I describe the severed hands and bloody fingers I saw on the pavement, and

how among the dead was a fifteen-year-old white schoolboy and a thirty-year-old white woman.

Maritz suggests that the bombs are a kind of warning—"while the rest of the world is euphoric over the elections, they show the real tension. Small fuses are lit everywhere, do you know what I'm saying?"

"Who do you think set those bombs?" Prinsloo asks. "Do you think it was the Zulus?"

A white man, I tell him, was seen running from the car before it exploded in Johannesburg, and another white was caught yesterday with explosives rigged in his car. The police say it's a right-wing conspiracy to disrupt the elections and have offered a half-million-dollar reward, hoping the money will entice a few unemployed right-wing canaries to sing.

Prinsloo's brow furrows. "Anybody who goes to jail now will be forgotten. They'll throw away the keys."

I never do see the trailer of mortars or the cache of machine guns Maritz is rumored to have stashed on the thousand-acre spread. Police sources tell me that such caches are buried on farmland all across South Africa. But Maritz keeps insisting that this farm is not a paramilitary base but a refugee camp for terrified whites who don't feel safe in the city.

Fear mongering has become a national sport in South Africa, and for the AWB, talk of the *swart gevaar*—the black threat—is a useful rallying cry; it doesn't help that in the recent past, isolated white farmers have been killed by black militants who chant, "One settler, one bullet" and "Kill the Boer." At a closed meeting of the AWB faithful I attended a few nights back in Durban, on the Indian Ocean, the local general had revealed a top-secret defensive plan in anticipation of "two million blacks rising out of squatter camps with AK-47's." Code-named Operation Thunder, the plan included cryptic phone calls, defensive *laagers*, safe houses, exodus routes, and, yes, indeed, a ship in the harbor.

As I leave Maritz's farm, he is still overseeing preparations for the apocalypse, convinced that thousands of white refugees from Johannesburg will flee. Two black workers—one wearing a Bing Crosby hat at a rakish tilt—are lifting another massive soup pot off the back of a truck. He calls out to me, "We're safe out here in the platteland. We know our blacks—they're like family."

**T**O REACH AWB headquarters in Ventersdorp, you cross the great fertile platteland of the Western Transvaal, through dazzling fields of maize and sunflowers. It was on this stretch of road one night last December that six AWB members, wearing stolen police uniforms, set up a fake roadblock and forced ten blacks from their cars at gunpoint, seating them on the tar road and shooting them at point-blank range.

A CNN crew waits at the corner. After weeks of shunning the media, Terre Blanche has invited journalists to join a two-hundred-car convoy of heavily armed AWB supporters who are heading to a rally fifty miles away, where he will talk about the arrest of the bombers. CNN is hoping for blood. "Do you know what AWB stands for?" the CNN cameraman asks, punching me in the arm. "Afrikaners Without Brains." At AWB headquarters, a bunker of sandbags is stacked eight feet high around the entrance, and steel mesh slants down to deflect grenades and petrol bombs. A large sign, in green letters, is taped to the outside wall: BEWARE MEDIA! AWB grunts hate the press, and as we approach them, I am reminded of the Zulu king Dingane

screaming, "Kill the Wizards!" before he slaughtered the party of whites he'd invited to his kraal in 1890.

At noon, the church bells toll, and the convoy heads north out of Ventersdorp: bearded men in khaki uniforms, on the backs of trucks, some wearing ski masks, shotguns held high. The CNN crew races ahead to get a long shot. I get a flat tire, which I fix with the help of a Japanese television crew, and we are cut off from the main convoy, which had been given military escort. We crest a hill and find our cars surrounded by a rogue group of AWB Wenkommando, the Victory Command. I am taking pictures when they leap from their pickups and begin smashing at windows with rifle butts, trying to strip us of cameras. They are especially intent on halting the Japanese in the next car from filming, but the TV crew accelerates onto the shoulder and speeds away. The snarling Wenkommando turn their attention to me. The barrel of a pump-action shotgun presses against my window, centimeters from my face. *One picture, one bullet.* Another masked soldier jumps onto my hood, crouches with his R-1 assault rifle. *You take a picture, I'll kill you.* I slide my camera under the seat and put my hands up. *I can blow your head off.* I drive on, dogged by them the whole way. At the rally, before Terre Blanche is introduced, a black reporter from the New York Daily News is beaten and chucked out. The AWB crowd cheers, and journalists, who now outnumber Terre Blanche supporters, threaten to walk out but don't. CNN leads the evening news with Terre Blanche sounding his familiar refrain that the bombings will continue. "We will use any means and ways to keep our people free and independent in the fatherland, which my ancestors paid in installments of blood and tears and the bodies of our children."

**T**HE THIRTY-TWO suspected bombers, including Prinsloo, sat in jail for three weeks before coming up for their bail hearing at the Magistrates Court in Johannesburg. At the hearing, the defendants are not chained or manacled. They come in jackets, denim, knit suits. Their heads shake, a few smile. They all stroke mustaches and beards. The gallery is packed with wives and family.

The courtroom is not so different from the one where Nelson Mandela, then a young lawyer and head of the ANC's military wing, stood in 1963 at his famous treason trial and made his case for a campaign of violent resistance against the apartheid state before being sent away to prison for twenty-seven years.

Twenty of the accused are members of the AWB's elite Iron Guard, a unit made up mostly of former South African special-forces experts, many of whom have explosives training; four are members of the AWB's Wenkommando; eight are regular AWB members. A police colonel testifies that the accused were also planning to detonate a five-ton bomb at Jan Smuts airport on the day of Mandela's inauguration. (The bomb that devastated the World Trade Center in New York was a tenth that size.) The confiscated evidence in-

cludes assault rifles, machine guns, revolvers, 150 pounds of explosives, stolen cars, false registration plates, nine parachutes, and a black wig. The police admit now that in their dawn raid, twenty-one escaped and are still on the run.

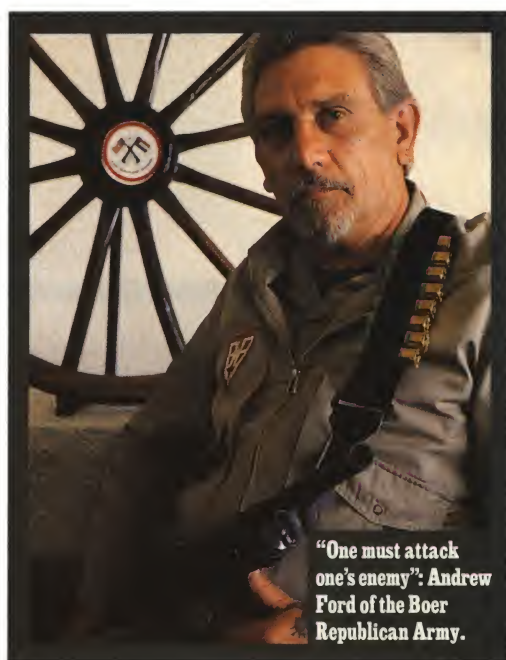
This will be the largest right-wing trial in South African history, and its procedures are governed by a new bill of rights. Under the apartheid legal system, ninety thousand blacks were detained without trial, often for months or years, and confessions were routinely coerced through torture so intense it left prisoners dead or maimed. Restricted now to interrogating prisoners in the company of lawyers, the colonel admits frustration; the defendants have not been forthcoming.

The suspected AWB bombers lean over the dock, kissing wives and girlfriends. The defense attorney bows to the judge, then addresses the state's chief witness.

But how, colonel, do you know it was these men?

Well, sir, the bombings have stopped.

The thirty-two accused bombers sitting on benches before the judge do not look so much different from sepia photographs of Boer commandos who fought British rule nearly a century ago. Add a few pipes, strange hats, and carbine belts over the shoulders, and these are the armed farmers whose collective will the might of the British empire couldn't thwart. This gallery of rogues descends from Boer farmers who invented the commando: small, quick-reaction units of snipers and horsemen whose hit-and-run attacks on British supply lines prolonged a war in Africa that had whites killing whites. And even back then, the Boers were explosives experts, blowing up bridges, sabotaging waterworks. The British suffered staggering losses to these farmers, finally resorting to the infamous scorched-earth policy of burning farmland and incarcerating Boer women, children, and old men



in concentration camps. Twenty-six thousand perished in the camps. Even as the Boer War ended in defeat for the Afrikaners, roaming commandos refused to concede. Those Boers came to be known as the *bittereinders*.

**T**HERE ARE MORE than forty militant right-wing organizations active in South Africa, and though the AWB is the most notorious, even locking up its leadership would not stop future bombings—or so most experts believe. In the days before Mandela's inauguration, while Terre Blanche's men were in jail, twelve hundred pounds of explosives were stolen from a gold mine. (About fifty-five thousand tons of commercial explosives are manufactured in South Africa each year. Most of it is destined for the gold mines, which have become the training ground for bombers.)

The Boer Republican Army, another right-wing splinter group, numbering perhaps two hundred, is well known to the police as a bombing organization. Andrew Ford, leader of the BRA, arranges to meet me one midnight at his rural hideout, and when Ford and his dogs greet me at the end of





The agony of the right-wing Afrikaner: AWB soldier pleads for mercy before being executed.

a dirt road, he lets me know that I've been tracked by radio and infrared goggles since turning off the asphalt a couple miles back. He refuses to take credit for the recent blasts, but admits that he has issued a general directive for his men to go after "soft targets." He doesn't believe the bombs were set by Terre Blanche's people, whom he finds "too defensive for my taste." His own group, he says, believes that "one must attack one's enemy."

The Boer Republican Army, sources in military intelligence tell me, works like the IRA, in cells of three or five. Cells do not know each other, and soldiers are known only by numbers. If a soldier gets caught, he can take out only his cell. And in one of the more cynical right-wing ploys, the BRA has trained units of mentally handicapped bombers.

Ford will not be satisfied until "every house, every block, every town" becomes "a front line in the war." The enemy is not just blacks, but also whites, especially those, such as de Klerk, who have betrayed the *volk*. Ford pledges that white businesses and homes will be future targets. "We're going to hit the big companies because it will throw our people out of work and then they will fight. If you take away the whites' luxuries, they'll have to fight. We must accept that we're in a war."

**T**HE BEARDED AWB soldier, hands up, stared into the television camera, pleading for someone to call a *fokken* ambulance. He was wounded, unarmed. Behind him, stretched on the backseat of their blue Mercedes, a companion was bleeding to death. The four doors of the Mercedes were wide open, windows smashed by bullets. Another soldier sprawled in the dirt, facedown, already dead. A howling black soldier crossed in front of the photographers, pointed his R-5 rifle

at the white man's thick torso, fired two shots, and proceeded to the other man, executing him also.

The bearded man's name was Alwyn Wolfaardt, and in the final weeks before the elections, his execution—broadcast on television around the world—symbolized the agony of the right-wing Afrikaner. The image remains central in the gallery of Afrikaner fears, as I found in the diary of a young Afrikaner woman who told me she'd saved a news photo of the execution, along with these words:

"We're going to be shot like this. We're going to plead for our lives. It's going to be like a holocaust. It's going to be 'Chop off the Boer's head and throw us aside.'"

To understand what led to the execution, which also effectively killed any hope of a unified right wing, I pay a visit to one of the most decorated generals in South African history, Constand Viljoen, a man Eugene Terre Blanche has branded "a political Judas goat sent to lead us to slaughter." They had once been allies in a broad movement called the Freedom Front, which had threatened a preelection right-wing coup. The plan had been for AWB regulars and Viljoen, who claimed twenty thousand loyalists in the South African Army, to take a white homeland by force.

But after a botched military excursion to "liberate" the black homeland of Bophuthatswana ended in defeat, with Afrikaners being executed, Viljoen instead withdrew from the alliance, cursing "Terre Blanche and his undisciplined men." Instead, he negotiated a deal with the ANC, effectively splitting the right wing. The ANC's agreement with the Freedom Front called for "substantial proven support" in the elections to continue negotiations around the "idea of self-determination, including the concept of a *volkstaat*." Speaking with a velvet voice and an iron fist, Viljoen threatened to mobilize his forces even on the eve of signing the accord. Other right-

wingers thought him naive and a sellout. Terre Blanche privately inveighed that Viljoen had been planted by de Klerk to destroy the right wing all along.

When I visited Viljoen, he'd just won a seat in Parliament and two hundred thousand votes for his beloved *volkstaat*. Backed by those votes, he was hoping to propose boundaries for a homeland, but the problem was that some of the areas he was hoping for had voted overwhelmingly ANC. He still clearly hadn't figured out what to do with blacks. For example, how would black residents be compensated for moving out of the *volkstaat*, and what would be the rights of blacks who chose to stay, and if any did choose to stay, wouldn't that defeat the very purpose of a white state? He admitted that these were questions he hadn't yet worked through. And though in theory whites might like the idea of a *volkstaat*, why would they give up houses and jobs and beachfront property to move to the dusty Transvaal? "We are only asking for some piece of land that is ours," he answered, "even if we don't live there." And he continued to insist that the *volkstaat* could have been taken by force before the elections, although he admits his soldiers could not have held it for more than two weeks.

Viljoen's right-hand strategist, Pieter Mulder, admitted to me that "the *volkstaat* idea stinks too much of apartheid for Mandela's nose, but we're thinking five, ten, fifty years down the road, and Mandela won't be here, but the forces for self-determination will be. Just look at Bosnia—the great melting pot doesn't work."

THE SCENE INSIDE the Soweto stadium, a victory celebration, is a right-winger's worst nightmare: seventy thousand *toi-toiing* ANC comrades, feet pounding, arms swinging, as *songomas* light sacred tribal smoke pots to rid the stadium of evil spirits and bless the Old Man, *madiba*, the incoming president, who steps now, in a bright-yellow shirt, onto a makeshift stage in the middle of the soccer field, his fists pumping the air. The undulating, surging, hands-to-the-heavens crowd sings out his name in praise, one great chorus of—hold-that-note-as-long-as-you-can—*Man-del-la*. And then from this side of the stadium, then from over there, a volley of gunshots into the air. The Spear of the Nation honor guards, in camouflage uniforms, are leopard-crawling across the infield—duck, dive, duck, dive, rolling. The gunshots continue, harmless as fireworks, and the crowd greets each sharp pop with a resounding cheer. But Mandela, surrounded by bodyguards, is not amused. He announces in a stern voice that "criminal elements have infiltrated our organization, and I will not have it." The crowd hushes and sits down on the concrete steps of the stadium. "If we find out who they are, we will expel them from the ANC."

And now the young comrades have come to Mandela's most notorious lieutenant, Robert McBride, their lips trembling in confused anger. The Old Man had insulted them.

McBride, who is of mixed race—in South Africa's new politically correct lingo a "so-called colored"—is a hero to these kids. He was sent to death row in 1987 for a bomb he planted under orders from the armed wing of the ANC. The bomb exploded at a nightclub in Durban, killing three whites and injuring sixty others. He was released in 1990 as part of an amnesty swap that also freed Barend Strydom, the white neo-Nazi who killed eleven blacks in a shooting spree in Pretoria in 1988.

Now McBride, a candidate for the Johannesburg provincial parliament, wearing a pinstripe suit, stands outside the Soweto stadium, cupping his hands as if holding a frail bird. "Mr. Mandela is like a little chicken," McBride explains. "Between now and the elections, we must protect him. After the elections, you can worry him."

"But why did he condemn us like that in public?"

"When you are a leader, it is difficult; you will understand," McBride, who is only thirty, says, leaning over and patting his soft Afro. "Look at the gray in my hair."

He tells them that the ANC has received intelligence reports that right-wing marksmen, or blacks hired by the right wing, are out to assassinate Mandela, and the young comrades, who have been on the front lines with rocks, rifles, and fiery necklaces for the past decade, nod soberly. "We must," he says, "show that we are disciplined."

Mandela has asked his countrymen to throw all their guns into the sea. Instead, they've just been buried. Everyone remembers where his gun is.

"We've all become quite damaged by what's come before," McBride tells me later. "One became accustomed to people dying on streets every day. People carrying guns. Ordinary people became soldiers. Youths became comrades. Violence and intolerance became the order of the day. If you raise children with guns, it's hard to put guns down."

ON THE DAY the jailed right-wingers had allegedly planned the greatest explosion in South African history—the five-ton airport bomb—Nelson Mandela took the oath of office. From the reviewing stand at the historic inauguration, the Voortrekker Monument was visible on a distant hill across Pretoria, a towering edifice bearing silent witness. After the ceremony, I went to the monument—the Afrikaner holy of holies, which depicts inside on massive friezes the great trek and the subsequent battles that led those early Afrikaners, the white tribe of Africa, to see themselves as God's chosen people. When I pulled up to the monument, I found it closed, all the doors locked. The grounds were being guarded by a platoon of black soldiers. They had been sleeping in the rough scrub grass at the base of the monument all week. Tomorrow, they said, it would be open for business again.

Terre Blanche was back on his farm, and I'd like to think he was currying his horses, worrying about how to pay the bills, and waiting, always waiting, for the day the police would come to pick him up. Nico Prinsloo remained in prison, and sometime in August—deep winter in South Africa—his trial will start. The police say they have a strong case, but Prinsloo, shaking my hand in the dock at the courthouse on my last day in South Africa, said he was confident. The judge has declared that if they are found guilty, he will show no mercy. But if Prinsloo and his fellow right-wing soldiers are found not guilty, it will be a consequence of the bill of rights that has been enshrined in the new South African constitution, the same constitution that they so violently opposed, at least in word, if not in deed.

And on the first working day of the new South African Parliament, President Mandela conducted business in Afrikaans—the language of his former oppressor, which he had mastered while in prison. And even General Viljoen, now the official leader of the conservative opposition in Parliament, was moved to tears. ■



# Mailer on Madonna

# Esquire

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